

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending and with this amendment, claims 1-4 and 6-9 are amended. Reconsideration and review are respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 7 have been amended to be in independent form, including all the limitations of the base claims. Applicant notes with appreciation the Examiner's statement regarding the allowability of these claims if amended in such a manner.

Claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. sec. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. These claims have been amended for clarification and to provide antecedent basis for the terms lacking antecedent basis, in order to obviate this rejection.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1 and 3-6 under 35 U.S.C. sec. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,917,985 to Im.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the attenuation device is placed between and physically connected to the two monomode fibres. Further, claim 1 defines the attenuating element as including one section of multimode fibre with an index gradient and one section of silica fibre without a core.

Im does not disclose these limitations. In the device of Im, attenuation is obtained by forming a non-spherical lens such as 122 or 124 at the end of each monomode fiber (see Figs. 9A and 9B) and rotating one fiber with regard to the other (see Fig. 7) or by changing the distance "d" between the non-spherical lenses (see Fig. 8). Simply put, Im describes an attenuator between monomode fibers 30a and 30b in which these fibers are not connected one to the other.

With regard to Claim 6, claim 6 has been amended to recite the step of connecting the end of a fibre ribbon with the end of another fibre ribbon and breaking the connected fibre ribbons at a location other than the connection point between them, and repeating the steps of connecting and breaking, so as to obtain a continuous fibre ribbon including two sections of monomode fibres (R_{1M} , R_{2M}) connected through the attenuation device which is obtained by breaking at least one ribbon of fibres with an index gradient (RG) and connecting to at least one broken ribbon of silica fibres without a core (R_S).

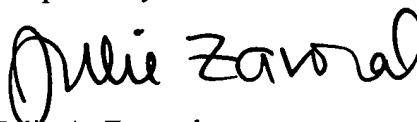
It is believed that such method steps as defined are not inherent to the manufacture of the optical attenuator described in Im, since the fibres are not physically connected to each other, as previously discussed.

Claims 3-5 are dependent on claim 1 and claims 8-9 are dependent on claim 6, and are allowable at least for the reasons stated above with respect to claims 1 and 6.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



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